



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

August 12, 1991

OFFICE OF  
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE

Mr. Thomas F. West  
Executive Director  
National Association of Texaco Wholesalers, Inc.  
6551 Loisdale Court, Suite 100  
Springfield, VA 22150

Dear Mr. West:

This responds to your May 14, 1991 request for clarification from EPA's Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST) as to whether compartmentalized underground storage tanks (USTs) are considered one tank for purposes of regulation under subtitle I of the Resource conservation and Recovery Act, as amended (RCRA).

Please be informed that OUST considers an underground tank vessel with compartments to be a single tank system for purposes of the 40 CFR Part 280 regulations. A compartmentalized tank vessel is manufactured in essentially the same way as all other single tanks. It is also transported, installed, and protected from external corrosion as a single unit. Thus, dividing such tanks internally into compartments does not change its single tank status under the regulations. In sum, a compartmentalized UST and the underground piping connected to it are considered a single tank system by the EPA.

Of course, under section 9008 of RCRA, state or local UST programs are allowed to "adopt or enforce any regulation, requirement or standard of performance respecting underground storage tanks that is more stringent" than federal requirements. Thus, states and local governments are free to interpret this question of compartmentalized tanks differently for purposes of state regulation or local ordinances, including their notification and financial responsibility requirements. We advise you to check with those officials directly to assure you understand state and local policies on this matter in their respective jurisdictions.

I hope the above information provides the clarification you seek on this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/

David W. Ziegele, Acting Director  
Office of Underground Storage Tanks